



The 2021 Second Quarter Report for the Corporate
Area Coroner's and the Special Coroner's Courts

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary 3

Introduction.....5

Chapter 1.0: The Corporate Area Coroner’s Court.....6

Chapter 2.0: The Special Coroner’s Court17

Concluding note22

Glossary of Terms24

Executive Summary

This report is a continuation of the expansion of the range of business lines formally reported on in the Jamaican Court system. Empirical measurements of court performance are crucial from several perspectives – among which is its use as an instrument of accountability and for informing policy and operational decisions. Such, are very important within the context of the qualitative and quantitative targets set out by the Chief Justice of Jamaica in establishing the Jamaican court system as the best in the Caribbean region within three years and among the bests in the World in the coming years.

This report provides vital insights into the operation of the Corporate Area Coroner's Court and the Special Coroner's Court, drawing on analysis of case activity for the second quarter of 2021. Among the most critical findings from the report are the high case disposal rates observed for both Courts. The Coroner's Court had a case disposal rate of 97.25% over the period while for the Special Coroner's Court the figure was 90.48%, placing these courts in the top quintile among the better performing in the court system on this measure for the period. The Coroner's Court also recorded a case clearance rate of 166.97% in the quarter while the Special Coroner's Court recorded a rate of 147.62%. 109 new cases were filed at the Corporate Area Coroner's Court in the quarter, while 21 were filed in the Special Coroner's Court. The estimated average time taken to dispose of matters at the Corporate Area Coroner's Court during the quarter was roughly 14 days, while the figure was 15 months for the Special Coroner's Court. The most common reasons for adjournment/continuance observed for the Corporate Area Coroner's Court over the period were adjournments for hearing of applications and due the lack of file readiness while a range of incidence of outstanding documents such as biological reports, chemical reports, ballistic reports

and other scientific reports featured prominently as causes for adjournment for the Special Coroner’s Court.

In terms of basic case demographics, the average age of the deceased for matters filed at the Corporate Area Coroner’s Court over the period is 53 years while the figure stood at 26 years for the Special Coroner’s Court. Further, males accounted for roughly 90.56% of deaths in the cases filed at the Corporate Area Coroner’s Court, while accounting for all deaths in the Special Coroner’s Court which were handled in the second quarter of 2021. In both courts, the causes of death reported varied widely, but most centered on gun related deaths. The police filed most of the cases originating in the Corporate Area Coroner’s Court in the quarter while the INDECOM accounted for the largest proportion of cases filed in the Special Coroner’s Court. The vast majority of deaths heard by the Special Coroner’s Court were related to the Jamaica Constabulary Force (JCF).

Key Performance Summary- Second quarter 2021

Court	Case Disposal Rate (%)	Case Clearance Rate (%)	Average time to disposition (months)
Corporate Area Coroner's Court	97.25	166.97	0.48
Corporate Area Special Coroner's Court	90.48	147.62	14.6

Introduction

The purpose of this report is to detail the vital statistics on case activity in the Corporate Area Coroners Court and the Special Coroners Courts in the second quarter of 2021. The report includes a range of productivity and time lag measures of the courts as well as related resource allocation and usage and other miscellaneous measurements. Ultimately, these measures seek to tell the story of the case flow in the Coroners and Special Coroners Courts, particularly with respect to the disposals, case delay factors and other important elements of case progression management and outcomes. The Coroners Court operates in all parishes across the island, however this report is focused on the Corporate Area Coroners Court. The Coroners Court is the arm of the courts that rules on the cause of death of individuals under various circumstances. It is distinguished from the Special Coroners Court, which focuses on the cause of death of individuals at the hands of individual or institutional state actors or while being under the care of state Institutions. There is a single Special Coroners Court in the island, located in Kingston and St. Andrew, but which moves around the island and hold special sittings in all parish courts.

Chapter 1.0: The Corporate Area Coroner’s Court

This subsection on the Corporate Area Coroner’s Court will detail information on the case activity in this court for the second quarter ended June 30, 2021, as well as the associated measurements of productivity in the disposal of cases, time lag measures outlining the average times between important events on the case flow continuum, as well as other supplementary measurements and information.

Table 1.0: Summary of time interval between date death reported and date case opened for the second quarter ended June 30, 2021

Descriptive Statistics (in days)

Number of observations	60
Mean	561.62
Std. Error of Mean	117.260
Median	238.00
Mode	86 ^a
Std. Deviation	908.289
Skewness	4.066
Std. Error of Skewness	.309
Range	5657
Minimum	27
Maximum	5684

a. Multiple modes exist. The smallest value is shown

The table above provides a descriptive summary of the time taken between the date deaths were reported and the date that the cases for investigation of causes of death were opened in court at the Corporate Area Coroner’s Court for the second quarter ended June 30, 2021. It is seen that from a sample of 60 observations, the average time taken between the date deaths were

reported and the date that the associated cases were opened in Corporate Area Coroner’s Court was roughly 562 days or 1.6 years. One of the most frequently occurring times (modal time) taken was 86 days or 2.9 months and the median was 238 days or approximately 8 months. The standard deviation stands at a high of 908 days or 2.5 years, strongly suggesting that the distribution of the times between reporting of death and the date the case opens in the court varies widely around the mean. The high positive skewness further suggests that decisively more of the scores fall below the overall average, a result that is not surprising considering that the modal and median values are significantly below the overall mean. The maximum time shown between date deaths reported and date case opened is approximately 5684 days or 16 years, while the lowest is 27 days.

Table 2.0: Case Activity Summary for the second quarter ended June 30, 2021

Approximate number of new cases filed	Approximate number of active cases	Approximate number of disposed or inactive cases (from those filed in the quarter)	Estimated Case disposal rate (%)
109	3	106	97.25

The above table provides a summary of the cases filed at the Corporate Area Coroner’s Court in the second quarter ended June 30, 2021. It is shown that 109 new cases were filed during the quarter, which is 56 cases or 105.66% more than the 53 cases filed in the similar second quarter of 2020, 106 of which were disposed or became inactive and 3 remained active cases at the end of the second quarter. These results yield an estimated case disposal rate of 97.25%, a 27.34 percentage points improvement when compared to the second quarter of 2020. This disposal rate is meets the international standard on this measure and suggests that for every 10 cases

filed over the period, roughly an equivalent of roughly 10 cases were disposed. The case clearance rate will be examined later in this report.

Table 3.0: Sampling distribution the of source of cases filed in the second quarter ended June 30, 2021

Source	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Police	76	71.03
Family	31	28.97
Total	107	100

A sample of 107 cases filed at the Corporate Area Coroner’s Court shows that 76 cases or 71.03% of cases filed were filed by the police, while 31 28.97% were filed by the family of deceased.

Table 4.0: Sampling distribution of deaths reported at various Police and brought before the court during the second quarter ended June 30, 2021

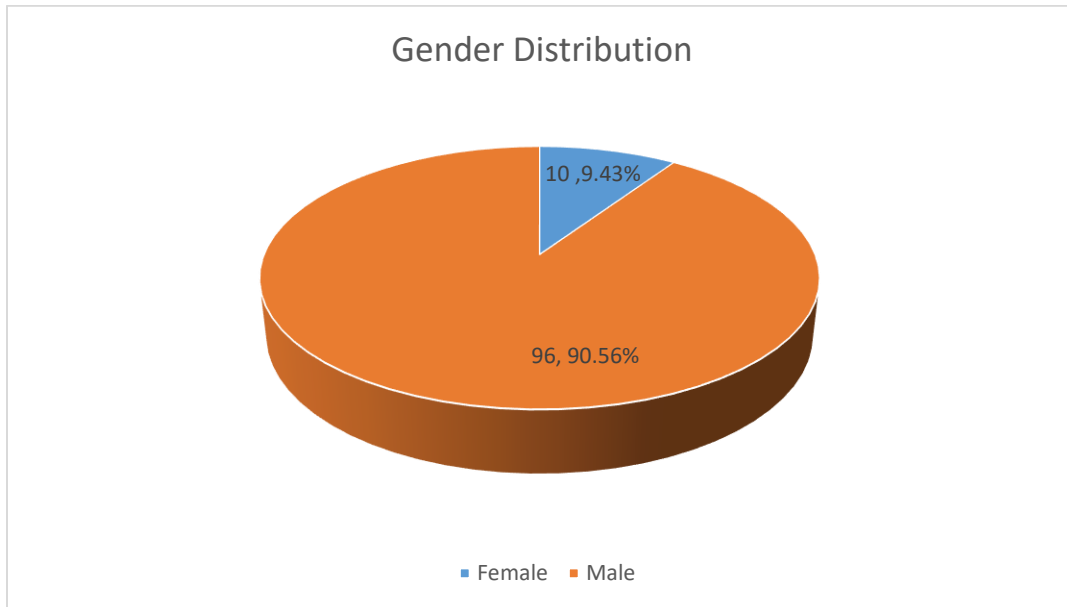
Police Station	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Hunts Bay Police Station	18	21.43
Central Police Station	12	14.29
Half Way Tree Police Station	10	11.90
Papine Police Station	10	11.90
Elleston Road Police Station	7	8.33
Sub-Total	57	67.86

Sample of observations (N)=84

The data showed a sample of 84 Coroner’s Court cases reported at the different Police stations in the Corporate Area which were subsequently brought to the Corporate Area Coroner’s Court. Of that number, the Hunts Bay Police Station accounted for the highest proportion of cases filed/investigated within the quarter with 18 cases or 21.43% of the sample. The Central police

station with 12 or 14.29% ranks next, while Half-Way-Tree police station and the Papine police station followed with 10 cases each or 11.90% of the sample. The top five police stations accounting for cases filed at the Corporate Area Coroner's Court was rounded off by the Elleston Road Police Station with 7 or 8.33%.

Chart 1.0: Distribution of gender of the deceased for new cases filed



The above chart summarizes gender distribution, using a sample of 106 deceased persons involved in the cases filed during the second quarter ended June 30, 2021. It is shown that 96 or 90.56% of the deceased were male, while the remaining 10 or 9.43% were female. In the similar second quarter of 2020, males accounted for 43 or 71.67% of the total sample, while the remaining 28% were accounted for by female.

Table 5.0: Descriptive Statistics on the age distribution of the deceased in cases filed in the second quarter ended June 30, 2021

Descriptive statistics (age in years)

Number of observations	103
Mean	53.21
Std. Error of Mean	2.281
Median	54.00
Mode	27 ^a
Std. Deviation	23.153
Skewness	.153
Std. Error of Skewness	.238
Range	87
Minimum	9
Maximum	96

a. Multiple modes exist. The smallest value is shown

A sample of 103 ages of the deceased involved in the cases filed, revealed that the average age is roughly 53 years, while the median is 54 years and one of the modal value is 27 years. The standard deviation stands at a moderate value of 23 years, indicating some amount of variation of the scores around the mean, while the skewness is a low positive value, indicating that most of the scores are clustered around the mean, though slightly more may be above it. The smallest age in the data set is 9 years, while the oldest was 96 years.

Table 6.0a: Sampling distribution of the causes of death reported for cases filed during the second quarter ended June 30, 2021

Cause of Death	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Shock and hemorrhage, Polytrauma, Multiple gunshot wounds	9	8.74
Multiple gunshot wounds	8	7.77
Multiple gunshot wounds of the head, neck and chest	7	6.80
Asphyxia, Hanging	2	1.94
Congestive Cardiac Failure, Ischemic Heart Disease	2	1.94
Sub-Total	28	27.18

Sample size (n)=103

The above table is computed using a sample of 103 observations of the causes of death associated with cases. It is shown that among the most common causes of death reported are death caused by shock and hemorrhage, polytrauma, multiple gunshot wounds with 9 or 8.74%, multiple gunshot wounds with 8 or 7.77% and gunshot wound to the head, neck and chest accounted for 6.80% of the sample. Asphyxia, hanging and congestive cardiac failure, Ischemic Heart Disease each accounted for 2 or 1.94% of the sample.

Table 6.0b: Sampling distribution of the causes of death as officially determined by the Coroner for matters disposed during the second quarter ended June 30, 2021

Cause of death determined by Coroner	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Death due to natural causes	39	60.94
Death due to gunshot wounds	17	26.56
Death due to heart attack	2	3.13
Death due to stab wounds	2	3.13
Death due to asphyxia from hanging	1	1.56
Death due to blunt force injury due to a fall	1	1.56

Death due to Colon Cancer	1	1.56
Death due to motor vehicle accident	1	1.56
Total	64	100.0

The above table is computed using a sample of 64 observations of the causes of death as officially determined by the Coroner associated with cases. It is shown that among the most common cause of death reported is death due to natural causes with 39 or 60.94% of the sample, with death due gunshot wounds with 17 or 26.56% ranking next. Death due to heart attack and death due to stab wounds with 3.13% each complete the top causes in the quarter. It is important to note that there may often be variances between the causes of death as reported and the causes of death as determined by the Coroner.

Table 7.0: Sampling distribution of the Summary of outcomes of Form D applications made during the second quarter ended June 30, 2021

Outcomes	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Section 14	46	69.70
Other	19	28.79
Trial and Judge	1	1.52
Total	66	100

During the processing of a case at the Coroner’s Court, a Form D application is made which the judge reviews in order to determine the direction of the case thereafter. The above table provides a summary of the outcomes of these applications over the period under examination. It is seen in the above table that the dominant outcome from the Form D application were decisions in accordance with Section 14, which means that the matter was accepted for an

Inquest to be carried out by the Coroner. Section 14 accounts for 46 or 69.70% of the outcomes, while the generic category ‘other outcomes’ accounted for 19 or 28.79%. These results are typical to the trends observed in the Coroner’s Courts Island wide. The data was computed using a sample of 66 cases.

Table 8.0: Sampling distribution of reasons for adjournment/continuance during the second quarter ended June 30, 2021

Reasons for adjournment/continuance	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Other	30	65.22
Part-heard (Continuance)	13	28.26
File incomplete/awaiting medical certificate	1	2.17
Hearing of application	1	2.17
Mention/Awaiting Jury Panel (continuance)	1	2.17
Total	46	100.00

A summary of 46 matters adjourned/continued over the time revealed that 30 or 65.22% were accounted for under reasons for adjournment pooled under the term, “other reasons”. Continuances (delays intrinsic to the progression of a case) by way of part heard matters with 13 or 28.26% of the sample rank next. Adjournments due to incomplete files/awaiting medical certificate, adjournments for the hearing of an application and continuances for mention/awaiting jury panel each accounted for 2.17% of the sample.

Table 9.0: Sampling distribution of the type of hearings in the second quarter ended June 30, 2021

Type of Hearing	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Chambers	108	100.0
Total	108	100.0

A sample of 108 hearings at the Corporate Area Coroner’s Court during the second quarter ended June 30, 2021, reveals that 100% of matters were chamber hearings.

Table 10.0: Sampling distribution of the methods of disposition of matters completed during the second quarter ended June 30, 2021

Methods of Disposition	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Section 14	78	56.12
Section 10	59	42.45
Inquest	2	1.44
Total	139	100.00

The methods of case disposition for a sample of 139 matters which were disposed during the second quarter ended June 30, 2021, revealed that 78 or 56.12% of matters were disposed by way of an Inquest under the provisions of Section 14 of the Coroner’s Court Act. Matters disposed by way of inquest under the provision of Section 10 of the Coroner’s Court Act followed this with 59 or 42.45% of the sample and matters disposed by inquest with 1.44%.

Table 11.0: Descriptive Statistics on the time to disposition for matters completed during the second quarter ended June 30, 2021

Descriptive Statistics (in days)

Number of observations	126
Mean	14.52
Std. Error of Mean	4.730
Median	4.00
Mode	2
Std. Deviation	53.096
Skewness	8.754
Std. Error of Skewness	.216
Range	552
Minimum	1
Maximum	553

The above data shows that the average time taken to dispose of matters during the quarter is approximately 15 days. This was derived from a sample of 126 matters disposed over the quarter. The data also revealed that the median time taken to dispose of the matters was 4 days and the modal time was 2 days. The standard deviation of 53.10, however, suggests that there is a wide variation in the individual scores and the high positive skewness indicates that a larger proportion of the scores fell below the overall mean. The minimum time taken was a day, with the maximum time taken being 553 days or approximately 2 years. The average time taken between the date the file was received and the date of first hearing was 8.25 days.

Table 12.0: Summary of the incidence of hearings during inquest for matters disposed during the second quarter ended June 30, 2021

Descriptive Statistics (in days)

Number of observations	155
Mean	2.4903
Std. Error of Mean	.13276
Median	2.0000
Mode	2.00
Std. Deviation	1.65289
Skewness	3.640
Std. Error of Skewness	.195
Range	12.00
Minimum	1.00
Maximum	13.00

The frequency with which cases are heard potentially slows down the rate of case clearance and the average time taken to dispose of cases and is therefore a vital statistical indicator of both the probability of case disposition and roadblocks to case progression. In the above table, it is seen that the average number of hearings in inquest from a sample of 155 cases disposed over the quarter was roughly 2.5, while the median and modal values were both 2. The lowest number of

hearings was 1 and the highest was 13. The standard deviation suggests there is some variation in the scores and the high positive skewness suggests that proportionately more of the scores fell below the overall average. A lower incidence of hearings is desirable to further reduce the average time to disposition.

Table 13.0: Case clearance rate summary for the second quarter ended June 30, 2021

Approximate number of new cases filed	Approximate number of cases disposed or inactive	Estimated gross case clearance rate (%)
109	182	166.97

Courts that consistently maintain an average case clearance rate of between 90%-110% long enough will at a minimum have its disposals keeping up with the number of new cases filed but may also likely make considerable strides in reducing its case backlog to an acceptable rate of under 5% of active cases. The Corporate Area Coroner’s Court with a case clearance rate of 166.97% for the second quarter ended June 30, 2021, exceeds the above-mentioned range which is indicative of good caseload management. This rate is 80.18 percentage points above the 86.79% recorded in the second quarter of 2020. There were 109 new cases filed during the quarter and 182 cases were disposed or became inactive (regardless of date of origin), leading to the stated clearance rate. It suggests that for every 10 new cases filed, between sixteen and seventeen cases were disposed of during the quarter.

Chapter 2.0: The Special Coroner's Court

As was the case above with the Corporate Area Coroner's Court, this section provides a detailed summary of case activity and events as well as case outcomes and related factors at the Special Coroner's Court in the second quarter of 2021.

Table 1.0a: Case activity summary for the second quarter ended June 30, 2021 in the Special Coroner's Court

Approximate number of new cases filed	Approximate number of active cases	Approximate number of disposed or inactive cases (from those filed in quarter)	Estimated Case disposal rate (%)
21	2	19	90.48

The above table provides a summary of the cases filed at the Cooperate Area Special Coroner's Court. It is shown that 21 new cases were filed over the quarter, 2 of which were still active at the end of the quarter and 19 were either disposed or became inactive at the end of the quarter. These results yield an estimated case disposal rate of 90.48%, suggesting that for every 10 cases filed over the period, roughly 9 were also disposed. This outcome augurs well for the productivity of the Special Coroner's Court.

Table 2.0: Sampling distribution of the parish of origin of matters filed during the second quarter ended June 30, 2021

Parish of Origin	Frequency	Percentage (%)
St James	15	60.00
Kingston	4	16.00
Westmoreland	4	16.00
Clarendon	1	4.00
St Catherine	1	4.00
Total	25	100.00

As a parish court, the Special Coroner’s Court has a single location in Kingston but is deployed island wide to hear cases originating set in the various parishes. The above table provides a summary of the ‘parish of origin’ of cases filed in the Special Coroner’s Court. It is seen that St. James with 60% of the cases filed, Kingston and Westmoreland with 4 or 16% each accounted for the largest share of new cases heard by the Special Coroner’s Court during the second quarter of 2021. Clarendon and St. Catherine with 4% each accounted for the remaining proportion.

Table 3.0: Sampling distribution of the source of matters filed over the second quarter ended June 30, 2021

Source	Frequency	Percentage (%)
INDECOM	25	100
Total	25	100.00

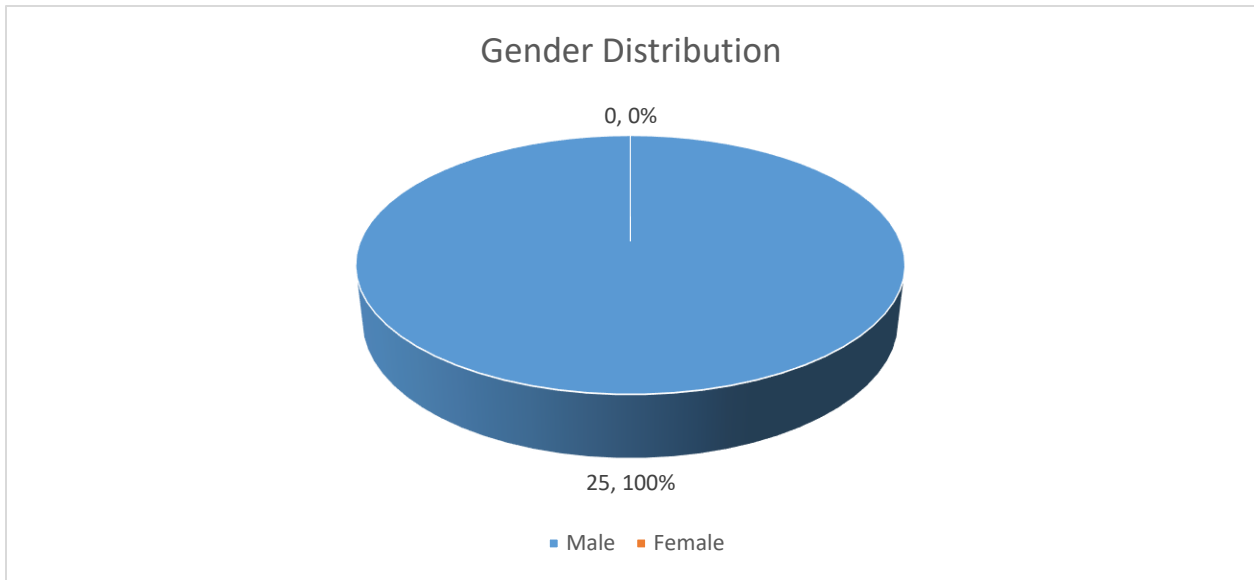
A sample of 25 matters filed at the Special Coroner’s Court over the second quarter ended June 30, 2021, shows that all cases were from INDECOM.

Table 4.0: Sampling distribution on the type of death by Institution for the second quarter ended June 30, 2021

Type of Death	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Jamaica Constabulary Force (JCF)	25	100
Total	25	100.00

It is seen in the above table, that all of the matters filed during the second quarter of 2021 were matters related to JCF deaths. The vast majority of the causes of death as reported in the cases filed during the quarter were stated as ‘multiple gunshot wounds’ or ‘gunshot wound to the body’, accounting for 96% of the matters.

Chart 1.0 Gender distribution of the deceased in cases filed in the second quarter ended June 30, 2021



The gender distribution of the deceased involved in 25 cases filed over the second quarter of 2021, shows that all were male.

Table 5.0: Descriptive Statistics on the age of the deceased in cases filed over the second quarter ended June 30, 2021

Descriptive Statistics (age in years)

Number of observations	24
Mean	25.9583
Std. Error of Mean	1.92380
Median	23.0000
Mode	19.00
Std. Deviation	9.42466
Skewness	2.010
Std. Error of Skewness	.472
Range	40.00
Minimum	17.00
Maximum	57.00

The above descriptive summary on the age of the deceased involved in cases filed during the second quarter of 2021 revealed that from a sample of 24 observations, the average age was

roughly 26 years, while the most frequently occurring age was 19 years old. The highest age recorded was 57 years, while the lowest is 17 years old. The moderate standard deviation of roughly 9 years suggests that there was a modest variation of the individual ages from the overall mean, while the positive skewness shown is an indication that proportionately more of the scores fell below the overall mean.

Table 6.0: Sampling distribution of the reasons for adjournment/continuances for matters heard in the second quarter ended June 30, 2021

Reasons for adjournment/continuance	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Other	108	89.26
Failure of Witness to Attend	9	7.44
Ballistic Report Outstanding	2	1.65
Jury Absent	1	0.83
Not Reached	1	0.83
Total	121	100.00

A sample of adjournments in the above table reveals that there were 121 incidences of adjournments. The majority of the adjournments were pooled under the category, “other”, with 89.26% of the sample. Adjournments due to failure of the witness to attend with 7.44% rank next, followed by ballistic reports outstanding with 1.65% of the sample.

Table 7.0: Descriptive statistics on the times to disposition for matters resolved during the second quarter ended June 30, 2021

Descriptive Statistics (Days)

Number of observations	12
Mean	438.0833
Std. Error of Mean	30.53028
Median	461.0000
Mode	461.00 ^a
Std. Deviation	105.75998
Skewness	-.191
Std. Error of Skewness	.637
Range	421.00
Minimum	237.00
Maximum	658.00

^a Multiple modes exist. The smallest value is shown

The above table uses a sample of 12 cases disposed in the second quarter of 2021 and reveals an estimated average of roughly 438 days or roughly 15 months, with a maximum of approximately 658 days or 1.8 years and a minimum of 7.9 months. The small negative skewness is an indication that slightly more of the scores in the distribution were above the series mean, while the moderately high standard deviation shows some amount variation in the data points around the overall mean.

Table 8.0: Descriptive statistics on the age of active cases as at the second quarter ended June 30, 2021
Descriptive Statistics (Days)

Number of observations	121
Mean	661.7851
Std. Error of Mean	43.63542
Median	601.0000
Mode	169.00
Std. Deviation	479.98962
Skewness	3.255
Std. Error of Skewness	.220
Range	3514.00
Minimum	43.00
Maximum	3557.00

The above data is based on sample of 121 active Special Coroner’s Court matters at the end of the second quarter of 2021. The average age of these matters was roughly 662 days or 22 months, while the most frequently occurring age in the distribution was 169 days. The standard deviation of roughly 480 days suggests that there is some dispersion in the individual scores around the average, while the positive skewness seen is an indication that there were more scores in the data set which fell below the overall average age of the active cases. The oldest active matter is 3557 days old or 9.9 years, while the newest case is 43 days.

Table 9: Case clearance rate summary for the second quarter ended June 30, 2021

Approximate number of new cases filed	Approximate number of cases disposed or inactive	Estimated Case clearance rate (%)
21	31	147.62

Courts that consistently maintain an average case clearance rate of between 90%-110% for long enough will at a minimum, have its disposals keeping up with the number of new cases filed but may also likely make considerable strides in reducing its case backlog rate to an acceptable rate of under 5% of active cases. The Corporate Area Special Coroner’s Court with a case clearance rate of 147.62% for the second quarter of 2021 exceeds the above-mentioned range which shows promising signs of a well- managed caseload. There were 21 new cases filed during the quarter and 31 cases were disposed or became inactive (regardless of date of origin), leading to the stated clearance rate. It suggests that for every 10 new cases filed between fourteen and fifteen cases were disposed.

Aggregate Case Activity Summary

Table 1.0: Aggregate case flow performance estimates for the second quarter ended June 30, 2021

Parish Court	Approximate number of new cases	Approximate number of disposed and inactive cases [from the stock of new cases filed]	Approximate gross/overall number of disposed cases (regardless of date of origin)	Estimated Case Disposal Rate (%)	Estimated Case Clearance Rate (%)
Corporate Area Coroner's Court	109	106	182	97.25	166.97
Corporate Area Special Coroner's Court	21	19	31	90.48	147.62
Total/Weighted Average	130	125	213	96.15	163.85

The above table provides a summary of aggregate case activity across the featured specialized Coroner's Court and Special Coroner's Court in the second quarter of 2021. It shows that a total of 130 new cases were filed in these courts, while 125 of these cases were disposed or became inactive, leading to an estimated weighted case disposal rate of 96.15%. The Corporate Area Coroner's court recorded an estimated case disposal rate of 97.27% and the Special Coroner's Court had an estimated case disposal rate of 90.48%, both impressive results. The table also shows that an overall number of 213 cases were disposed or became inactive in the quarter (regardless of date of origin), leading to an estimated weighted case clearance rate of 163.85%. The Corporate Area Coroner's court recorded a case clearance rate of 166.97% and the Special Coroner's Court had an estimated case clearance rate of 147.62%, both impressive results which satisfies the international standard.

Concluding Note

The Corporate Area Coroner's Court and the Special Coroner's Court continues to make a profound contribution to the fulfillment of the goal of the judiciary of reducing the overall net case backlog rate to under 5% within the next few years. Accomplishing this task requires sustaining consistently high rates of case disposal and case clearance. This second quarter report further affirms the position of both of these courts among those in the Jamaican court system with the highest rates of both case disposal and case clearance. The Special Coroner's Court for example recorded a case clearance rate of 147.62% in the quarter while the Corporate Area Coroner's Court recorded a rate of 166.97%, both among the highest in the island on this vital metric in the period. Based on current trend, these two courts are poised to reduce their case backlog to below 5% of active cases by the end of 2022, thus making an appreciable contribution to the target set out by the Chief Justice for the Jamaican court system to becoming the best in the region and one of the most productive in the world.

Glossary of Terms

Sampling Distribution: A sampling distribution of a given population is the distribution of frequencies of a range of outcomes that could possibly occur for a statistic of a population. A population is the entire pool from which a statistical sample is drawn.

Clearance rate: The ratio on incoming to outgoing cases or of new cases filed to cases disposed, regardless of when the disposed cases originated. For example, in a given Term 100 new cases were filed and 110 were disposed (including cases originating before that Term) the clearance rate is 110/100 or 110%.

Note: The clearance rate could therefore exceed 100% but the disposal rate has a maximum value of 100%.

A persistent case clearance rate of less than 100% will eventually lead to a backlog of cases in the court system. The inferred international benchmark for case clearance rates is an average of 90%-110 annualized. This is a critical foundation to backlog prevention in the court system. ⁱ

Disposal rate: As distinct from clearance rate, the disposal rate is the proportion of new cases filed which have been disposed in a particular period. For example, if 100 new cases are filed in a particular Term and 80 of those cases were disposed in said Term, then the disposal rate is 80%.

Note: A persistent case clearance rate of less than 100% will eventually lead to a backlog of cases in the court system. ⁱⁱ

Trial/hearing date certainty: This is the proportion of dates set for trial or hearing which proceed without adjournment. For example, if 100 trial dates are set in a particular Term and 40 are adjourned, then the trial certainty rate would be 60%. The international standard for this measure is between 92% and 100%.

Courtroom utilization rate: The proportion of courtrooms in full use on a daily basis or the proportion of hours utilized in a courtroom on a daily basis. The international standard for this rate is 100%.

Case congestion rate: The ratio of pending cases to cases disposed in a given period. It is an indication of how fatigued a court is, given the existing state of resources and degree of efficiency. A case congestion rate of 150% for example, is an indication that given the resources currently at a court's disposal and its degree of efficiency, it is carrying 1.5 times its capacity.

Case File Integrity Rate: Measures the proportion of time that a case file is fully ready and available in a timely manner for a matter to proceed. Hence, any adjournment, which is due to the lack of readiness of a case file or related proceedings for court at the scheduled time, impairs the case file integrity rate. The international benchmark for the case file integrity is 100%

Standard deviation: This is a measure of how widely spread the scores in a data set are **around** the average value of that data set. The higher the standard deviation, the higher the variation of the raw scores in the data set, from the average score. A low standard deviation is an indication that the scores in a data set are clustered around the average.

Outlier: An outlier is a value that is too small or too large, relative to the majority of scores/trend in a data set.

Skewness: This is measure of the distribution of scores in a data set. It gives an idea of where the larger proportion of the scores in a data set can be found. Generally, if skewness is positive as

revealed by a positive value for this measure, this suggests that a greater proportion of the scores in the data set are at the lower end. If the skewness is negative as revealed by a negative value for this measure, it generally suggests that a greater proportion of the scores are at the higher end. If the skewness measure is approximately 0, then there is roughly equal distribution of scores on both the higher and lower ends of the average figure.

Range: This is a measure of the spread of values in a data set, calculated as the highest minus the lowest value. A larger range score may indicate a higher spread of values in a data set.

Case backlog: A case that is in the court system for more than two years without disposition.

Source:

<http://courts.mi.gov/Administration/SCAO/Resources/Documents/bestpractice/BestPracticeCaseAgeClearanceRates.pdf>

ⁱ Source:

<http://courts.mi.gov/Administration/SCAO/Resources/Documents/bestpractice/BestPracticeCaseAgeClearanceRates.pdf>

A weighted average can be more accurate than a simple average in which all numbers in a data set are assigned an identical weight.

Continuance and Adjourment: In a general sense, any delay in the progression of a hearing in which a future date/time is set or anticipated for continuation is a form of adjourment. However, in order to make a strict distinction between matters which are adjourned for procedural factors and those which are generally avoidable, court statistics utilizes the terms 'continuance' and 'adjourment'. Here, 'continuance' is used strictly to describe situations in which future dates are set due to procedural reasons and 'adjournments' is used to describe the circumstances in which future dates of appearance are set due to generally avoidable reasons. For example, adjournments for another stage of hearing, say from a plea and case management hearing to a trial hearing or from the last date of trial to a sentencing date are classified as 'continuance' but delays for say, missing or incomplete files, due to outstanding medical reports or attorney absenteeism are classified as 'adjournments'. Adjournments as defined in this document have an adverse effect on hearing date certainty rates but continuances do not.

Weighted Average: Weighted average is a calculation that takes into account the varying degrees of significance of the groups or numbers in a data set. In calculating a weighted average for a particular variable, the individual scores or averages for each group are multiplied by the weight or number of observations in each of those groups, and summed. The outcome is then divided by the summation of the number of observations in all groups combined. For example, if we wish to calculate the weighted average clearance rate for the parish courts, the product of the clearance rate and number of cases for each court are computed, added, and then divided by the total number of cases across all the parish courts. This means that a court with a larger caseload has a greater impact on the case clearance rate than a smaller court.

